

Navigating the Atlantic

Brazil's defense engagements with Africa in the
South Atlantic

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10/2016

Working Paper Number 4

PRIMO Working Paper Series
Working Paper No. 4, October 2016

Internet: www.primo-itn.eu

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 607133

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ISSN 2365-032X

Abstract / Keywords

Brazil's recent inroads towards Africa reflect one façade of the country's greater aspirations. Ranging from technical cooperation projects and a push for dynamic commercial relations to the promotion of inter-regional dialogues, Brazil's presence in Africa also comprises initiatives in the security realm. Not receiving matching attention, endeavors in the security domain reveal Brazil's aspiration of building the South Atlantic as a region in which South America and Africa can foster common ground, preclude extra-regional powers, secure maritime resources and develop naval defense industry. Amidst this background, I argue Brazil engaged in securitization practices in order to promote shared understandings and cooperation in both sides of the South Atlantic. In this work, I confront bilateral cooperation projects with African partners with the recent multilateral revitalization of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS) in order to attest to which extent Brazil was able to succeed in region-building practices and could conform a coherent grand strategy. The conclusion confirms the existence of a disconnection between the bilateral and multilateral dimensions of Brazil's engagements, which undermines the region-building process and minimizes the ability of this country to act in the South Atlantic.

Keywords: South Atlantic; Brazil; Africa; ZOPACAS; security

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Introduction¹

The interactions between Brazil and Africa do not constitute a homogeneous picture. Throughout time, the relationships between the two sides of the South Atlantic² uncover moments of proximity with periods of mutual indifference. Albeit such incongruences are true, Africa has played an active role in the formation of Brazil's national identity and in the shaping of its external endeavors. More recently, Africa regained a central standing for Brazil's policy-makers and assumed a pivotal locus in the country's goal of diversifying its foreign relations and projecting power. This renovated interest was accompanied by practical consequences, with the establishment of technical cooperation projects, the promotion of inter-regional dialogues, the opening of new embassies and a push for commercial exchanges.

¹ The author thanks Janis van der Westhuizen, Cord Jakobeit, Bruno Reis, Jörg Meyer, Pedro Seabra, Insa Ewert and Jayane Maia for their valuable insights on this paper. Full responsibility for its content, however, remains with the author alone.

² For Brazilian authorities, the South Atlantic is delimited by the 16th parallel North, the West coast of Africa, Antarctica, the East coast of South America and the East coasts of the Lesser Antilles (Brazil, 2012). The term "West coast of Africa", present in official documents, is broad and unclear, as it can stretch from Morocco to South Africa. It can be misinterpreted as "West Africa", which refers to the geographic region between Nigeria and Mauritania that also include countries not located on the coastline. For means of clarification, this article focuses on Brazil's defense engagements with countries of Africa's Western coast, which involve states of West Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa.

Initiatives in the security and defense realms are a significant component of Brazil's inroads towards Africa.³ Paradoxically, they have received less attention from the literature, remaining barely comprehended until the recent appearance of a number of works (for example, Abdenur and Marcondes, 2014; Aguilar, 2013; and Seabra, 2016a). This article seeks to build upon these contributions. It investigates Brazil's aspiration of building the South Atlantic as a region in which South America and Africa can foster common ground, preclude extra-regional powers, secure maritime resources and develop a naval defense industry.

I argue that Brazil engages in securitization practices with its African partners in respect of common challenges in the South Atlantic. By means of these securitization moves, I contend that Brasília endeavors to promote the idea of the South Atlantic as a zone free of nuclear weapons and characterized by peace, socioeconomic development and security and defense cooperation. Such objectives were advanced during the presidencies of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), which compose the time frame of this paper, by the Navy and the ministries of External Relations and Defense. Throughout this paper, Brazil's securitization practices in the South Atlantic are analyzed in the country's bilateral and multilateral engagements with its counterparts of Africa's Western coast.

Bilateral initiatives comprise military training, naval exercises, defense agreements, scientific and technical cooperation on surveying of continental shelves and maritime energetic resources, sales of military hardware, and exchanges of visits between high-level authorities. The multilateral dimension is mainly focused on the recent revitalization of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS). Other multilateral initiatives forwarded by Brazil such as the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue

³ In Brazil's view, security refers to a condition through which a country can preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as promote its national interests. Defense is a means to guarantee the achievement of security (Brasil, 2012a). This article considers defense and security as intertwined concepts.

Forum, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), and the Africa-South America Summit (ASA) are analyzed in relation to security and defense matters only.

My major proposition is that Brazil's securitization practices are aimed at fomenting cooperation with its African partners at the other side of the South Atlantic. Contributions from the Copenhagen School of security studies argue that the promotion of cooperation can potentially foster the formation of a regional security complex (RSC), a specific geographic area that has its members tied by interdependence in defense and security matters.⁴ Drawing from this theoretical background, this article comprises two objectives. The main objective is to explain how Brazil securitized the South Atlantic. A secondary and complementary objective is to see to which extent Brazilian securitization moves indeed could promote the South Atlantic as a cooperative region led by Brazil.

I am not interested in looking at the intentions or motives behind foreign policy practices, as this would require a diverse and more extensive analytical framework. Furthermore, this article does not study possible beliefs that prompted Brazilian policy-makers into action as regards the South Atlantic. In this sense, I do not analyze *why* Brazil securitized the South Atlantic. Instead, I first investigate *how* Brazil's securitization moves occurred and then whether or not they could promote a common cooperative sense in the South Atlantic.

The article is divided in four sections. The first centers on theoretical assumptions, mainly on the concepts of securitization, regional security complexes, and on approaches to region building. The second provides an overview on Brazil's renewed stance on the South Atlantic. The third is divided in the bilateral and multilateral initiatives promoted by Brazil in the defense and security domains alongside the other side of the Atlantic. The fourth section sees to which extent Brazil's securitization practices in both bilateral and

⁴ The concept of regional security complex (RSC) is discussed in the second section of this paper. I rely on it as a conceptual tool to explain the extent to which Brazil could promote the South Atlantic as a cooperative region. For matters of parsimony, the foreign policies of other South Atlantic countries are not examined.

multilateral arenas are coherent and whether or not the country promoted the South Atlantic as a cooperative region. The last section concludes.

1 Theoretical assumptions

Among the several intakes in the literature of international relations that study the conceptualization of “region”, there are two that stand out. The first is more connected to traditional mainstream theoretical currents of the discipline and define region as a possible result of geographical proximity between states, the frequency of their interactions, the degree of economic interdependence, and, in some cases, ideological proximity (Deutsch, 1969; Mansfield and Solingen, 2010). The second comes from a social constructivist approach and argues regions are byproducts of states’ foreign policies. They are not natural entities of global affairs and need to be artificially assembled, hence being social constructions (Katzenstein, 1996).⁵ Relying on this last contribution for the definition of region, this section investigates the concepts of regional security complexes (RSC) and securitization. I later apply them to Brazil’s endeavors in the South Atlantic.

1.1 Securitization processes and regional security complexes

As far as regions are a defining element of current world affairs, there is clear uncertainty on what prompts a region into existence. With the end of the Cold War and the relative (re-) ascension of powers such as China, India, and Brazil, regions gained relevance, with some

⁵ Anderson (2006) argues key actors in specific regions function as “region builders”, helping to shape, disseminate and socialize a regional perspective to others.

of these countries being pointed out as possible regional gatekeepers (Acharya, 2014). This reasoning assumes regions function as “clusters” in an anarchic system, preserving advantages and precluding or at least making the action of outsiders difficult. Common norms and rules can be developed within regions, bonding together countries and establishing some degree of order in their interactions. Nolte (2016: 2) argues the creation of regional organizations “constitutes and consolidates” a region, routinizing processes and giving a region an “identity”.

Likewise, Powers and Goertz (2011: 2395) ascertain institutions are not just material byproducts of state interaction, but social constructions. Although they reckon the possibility of informal forums or coalitions to later become institutionalized, they value formal institutions as the mechanisms that make a region. According to their causal path, states create organizations and these bodies subsequently determine the formation of a particular region. Since the work of these authors is mainly centered on the formation of regional economic institutions (REIs) as the case of the European Union (EU) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), they assume states can be members of multiple regions. In their view, REIs serve both economic and security imperatives in managing interstate conflict, working as the “institutional basis” of a region. More importantly, they defend the emergence of regional integration with a common will to deal with economic problems, which is related to a functionalist interpretation of institutions. Their concept overlaps with the notion of regional security complex (RSC), which derives from the writings of Buzan and Wæver (2003).

The core divergence from REIs is that RSCs revolve around security concerns. For Powers and Goertz (2011: 2396), REIs can widen its original functions and ultimately end up involving security, but the opposite process “seems quite rare”. When it comes to RSCs, however, they do not presuppose prior creation of institutions with treaties and documents that grant international legal status in order to exist. Furthermore, Buzan and Wæver disregard the possibility of countries to integrate multiple regions, instead opting to

privilege their membership in individual regions that ideally would be restricted to a specific geographic area. Here, interdependence travels from economic exchanges to a security-led orientation, in which security interdependence is “normally patterned into regionally based clusters”, or security complexes (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 4).

What constitutes a threat is subject to arbitrary state decisions because the operation of RSCs hinges on “patterns of amity and enmity among the units in the system, which makes regional systems dependent on the actions and interpretations of actors”, and not solely a consequence of how power is distributed (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 40). In other words, RSCs are “a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 44).⁶

With this structure-oriented view to regional security, the authors affirm threats have a territorial base and defend they are dealt primarily by the members of a regional security complex. This theoretical proposition can be applied to current times, when countries such as China, India, Brazil, and South Africa exert regional influence and have achieved more means to autonomously solve menaces.⁷ Unlike past times, these regional powers have more material capabilities and chances to enable regional support in order to suppress challenges, namely of a non-state nature, and to keep established powers at bay. This is true if one considers, for instance, the making of the South American Defense Council (SDC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

⁶ Powers and Goertz (2011: 2404) identify four attributes in Buzan and Wæver’s conceptualization of region: interdependence; security-based; geographic proximity; and separation from other regions.

⁷ In their analysis, they divide countries in superpowers, great powers, and regional powers. This classification is then applied in the definition of RSCs. Superpowers and great powers operate at the system level, while regional powers remain tied to the regional level.

The concept of securitization comes from the idea that security is relational. It refers to the processes through which security issues come into being. As Buzan and Hansen (2009) point out, securitization is defined as social processes by which groups of people *construct* something as a threat or present it as an existential threat.⁸ In their view,

“The general concept of ‘security’ is drawn from its constitution within national security discourse, which implies an emphasis on authority, the confronting – and construction – of threats and enemies, an ability to make decisions and the adoption of emergency measures. Security has a particular discursive and political force and is a concept that does something – securitise – rather than an objective (or subjective) condition” (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213).

Securitization, therefore, does not exist per se, but as a consequence of an actor’s political will.⁹ It is an *action* of giving meaning to something that otherwise would not matter or matter less in terms of security. Discourses are the means by which actors can give sense to an issue. These utterances, which are normally put forward by a group in power, can assume the form of speeches, official documents, governmental decisions, and interviews, just to mention some.

The concept of securitization is contemporary to the end of the Cold War, when security changed from a strict military nature to broader issues mostly with a non-military feature. Amidst this transformation, classic readings on security could not account for fast changes in state and non-state interactions. In the classic definition of Buzan, Wæver and Jaap (1998: 24), securitization comes into play when an issue is “presented as an existential

⁸ For Buzan and Hansen (2009), securitization theory relies on three main roots: (i) speech act theory; (ii) Schmittian understanding of security and exceptional politics; and (iii) traditionalist security debates.

⁹ The discussion can derivate to whether or not securitization is a consequence of conscious or unconscious decisions or motivations. This is not tackled in my work.

threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure". In their consideration, securitization is enacted by political discourses and practices, making something or someone a security concern that should be dealt with accordingly.¹⁰ Threats, by themselves, do not autonomously exist. They are forged by the decisions of political actors, in what the authors call a "speech act". Moreover, the acceptance by an "audience", which can be domestic groups, neighboring countries or the international society, is crucial for securitization to be effectively implemented.¹¹

The literature also implies that "securitizing" something means giving a sense of urgency to it. In extreme cases, securitization can open space for violations of established rules and norms by the ones in power.¹² In the chain of procedures related to the crafting of something as a threat, it normally starts with actors determining the subject to be secured, follows with the formatting of official discourses to an audience, and end up with the definition of possible matters to be taken for tackling the insecurity. This article mostly covers this last moment, since it analyzes how Brazil securitized issues in the South Atlantic along with its partners of Africa's Western coast.

The way to deal with the subject of securitization varies according to the interests of the ones who securitized it. Generally, theory affirms an issue can be dealt with in a threefold manner: (i) with day-to-day regular policies, not requiring any extraordinary measures, which is empirically distant from the conceptual definition of securitization; (ii) with the allocation of special resources such as the creation of a bureaucratic department, the enhancement of financial provisions for a group or ministry, the establishment of a new public policy, as well as by the use of media strategies for creating popular awareness; and (iii) with urgent procedures that can violate regular legal and social rules (Buzan and

¹⁰ Floyd (2016) works on what and who defines the success of securitization practices.

¹¹ Several criticisms have been raised over time on the theories coming from the Copenhagen school of security studies. See: Williams (2003) and Booth (2005).

¹² Buzan, Wæver and Jaap (1998: 40-41) mention "political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups".

Hansen, 2009: 213). Later in this paper I show how Brazil's securitization moves in the South Atlantic are covered by the second of these approaches.

Although Buzan and Wæver (2003: 56) affirm a regional security complex "must contain dynamics of securitization", the relationship between both concepts is not straightforward. Firstly, the concept of regional security complex is static. When building up the theory, Buzan and Wæver (2003) do not give much attention to what prompts a RSC into being or to which interactions occur within it. Instead, they loosely mention that RSCs comprise "interdependence" and "interactions" between the actors that constitute part of it. Relying on a structural view of state interaction, they are more interested in determining what are RSCs' main traits and in which parts of the world one can identify them. This conceptual insufficiency creates an empirical problem when one attempts to see how securitization practices take place and to which extent they can promote regional cooperation or cohesiveness, as is the case of this work.

In other words, Buzan and Wæver (2003: 4) do not clearly associate the links between securitization processes and region building. Both concepts are generally treated in a separate manner. The authors do not establish causal antecedence or define the degree to which degree securitization as foreign policy practices relate to the structures they name RSCs. Instead, they opt to correlate both concepts stating that "processes of securitization and thus the degree of security interdependence are more intense between the actors inside such complexes" rather than between them and external powers.

By doing so, they do not account for the formation of security dynamics at the regional level. Throughout their discussion with neorealist, globalist, and social constructivist branches of theory, Buzan and Wæver take the existence of RSCs for granted. Their central concern is with levels of analysis, or in which dimension of international affairs - global, regional, or national - a threat is securitized. They mention RSCs are "defined by actual patterns of security practices" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 41), but do not go beyond. My

position is that these security practices can *create* regional cooperation. Agency is to be brought back in if one endeavors to analyze state interactions in terms of security.

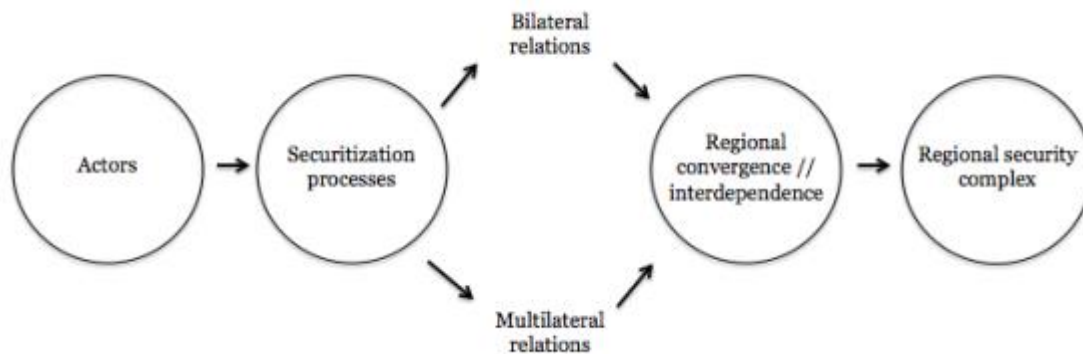


Figure 01. Pathway to regional security complexes

Following Figure 01, I argue actors can turn an issue into a security matter in order to create regional convergence or interdependence. Whereas I use the general naming “actors”, I defend states, through their political elites, as the ones that normally enable securitization processes. They do so by crafting official statements, governmental documents, or by invoking security treaties and alliances. The interests behind such moves are of multiple sources, varying from economic and political imperatives to a desire to project power. Examples abound. Whilst the United States securitized the fight against narcotics in Latin America, some conservative political parties securitized the recent influx of refugees towards Europe’s borders.

Processes of securitization can leave state limits and evolve into bilateral or multilateral settings. Sometimes the way a country deals with an alleged threat goes beyond the national domain because the issue being securitized requires broader coordination. Some other times, states bring others into the matter in question because they do not maintain

the means to solely tackle the insecurity. Additionally, they can seek external support so as to achieve legitimacy when transforming something into a security challenge. By receiving that kind of backing, a claim that an issue is an existential threat gains substance.

If state A considers X an issue subject to securitization – for example, the need to secure mineral and energetic reserves or to exclude extra-regional powers - and state B does not, cooperation between them is less probable. Alternatively, if state A considers X an existential threat and promotes the same understanding in state B, cooperation is more feasible. The promotion of such understanding can come in multiple forms. In the defense realm, just to mention some, it can occur through socialization of security practices via military formation and high-level contacts between authorities, by calls for joint exercises, or by convincing audiences from other states, such as public opinion, interests groups and bureaucracies. On a more significant scale, these bilateral practices can involve multiple partners, evolving into a regional approach to similar security concerns.

My point is that states can adopt strategies of securitization *by means of* bilateral and multilateral relations in order to foster a common sense on how to deal with insecurity. With this move, they deliberately externalize national preferences and foreign policy goals to others, claiming cooperative action is needed. Established or developing powers with a regional standing have the conditions to do so, since they are the ones capable of fomenting collective support and of granting incentives (or coercion) for others to join in. As Hurrell (2007: 143) mentions, “it is not helpful to draw an overly sharp distinction between power-based accounts of the region on the one hand and institutional and identity-based accounts on the other”.

The chain of events described in Figure 01. can ultimately evolve into pattern exchanges between a state and its neighboring countries, progressing into security settings, which is closely related to the definition of a regional security complex. Those can become formal regional institutions as the case of the European Union (EU) or informal groupings. Adler and Greve (2009: 63) affirm security practices can range from roughly tied contacts to

“conceiving a specific region as a mature or tightly-coupled security community where power is understood to create a core of strength which in fact may attract non-members of the community to join”.

This analysis will focus on Brazil’s securitization practices in the South Atlantic. Bilateral and multilateral relations with African partners are considered, with a focus on whether the South Atlantic turned into a cooperative region. The next section looks into the country’s renewed interest in the South Atlantic.

2 Brazil’s renewed stance on the South Atlantic: an overview

For having the largest Atlantic coast in the world (around 7.500 kilometers), Brazil’s interests in the South Atlantic remount to its founding. It was through its waters that the Portuguese colonization took place and that slave traffic, which formed most of the country’s manpower at the time, was channeled. Cultural, economic and political ties were established and are vivid until these days in the composition of Brazil’s population.¹³ The frequency of these connections was such that Portugal demanded a clause in the treaty that ended the colonial war and reckoned Brazil’s independence that the newly sovereign country would not seek union with Portuguese possessions in Africa.

In the second half of the XIX century, Brazil depended on maritime routes to canalize most of its agriculture goods and diplomatic exchanges towards the European monarchies and the United States. The association of the Atlantic with trade was complemented by security concerns during the First and the Second World Wars, when German submarines conducted naval operations against Brazilian vessels, causing human and material losses. Throughout the Cold War, Brazil did not have a clear posture regarding the South Atlantic

¹³ Brazil hosts the biggest population with African heritage outside Africa.

and its relations with the African continent were erratic and permeated by silences. Whereas in the 1950s Brazil privileged relations with Portugal, in the 1960s it assumed a rhetoric defense of decolonization. In the following decade, it was the first country to establish formal contacts with the newly independent Marxist regime of Angola, and one of the first to set up diplomatic ties with Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

The 1980s saw the first visit of a Brazilian president to Africa and the creation of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS) in 1986, a diplomatic move with the aim to preserve the “independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity” of the South Atlantic states (United Nations General Assembly, 1986). The ZOPACAS did not gain momentum, nor evolved into a more formal mechanism of interstate coordination.¹⁴ During the next years, Brazil’s relations with Africa received mild political attention, with limited contacts being crafted, such as the creation of the CPLP in 1996, Brazil’s presence in peacekeeping operations in Mozambique and Angola, and a fresh focus in the relations with post-apartheid South Africa.¹⁵

With the coming into power of the Worker’s Party in 2003, the South Atlantic assumed additional importance in Brazil’s strategic thought (Abdenur and Neto, 2014). In his inauguration speech, president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva placed South Africa amongst the “great developing nations”, emphasized the deep bonds that unite Brazil and the African continent and declared Brazilian disposition to actively contribute for African’s development (Brasil, 2008). Former minister of External Relations Celso Amorim noted Brazil’s growing commercial ties and relatively short distances to Africa, accentuating the region is a “very close neighbor with whom we have strategic interests” (Amorim, 2011).

¹⁴ The ZOPACAS is dealt in greater detail further along in this paper.

¹⁵ For a more complete account of Brazil-African relations, see: Saraiva (1996). Seabra (2016a) offers a comprehensive work on the defense relations between both sides of the Atlantic.

The new approach to Africa involved a multiplicity of initiatives pushed by the Brazilian government. First of all, Lula's administration opened 19 new embassies in Africa, composing a total of 37 diplomatic posts and making Brazil to rank among the countries with most diplomatic representations in the continent (Stolte, 2012).¹⁶ In the realm of trade, Brazilian exports to Africa, which mostly rely on manufactured and semi-manufactured products, rose 247% between 2002 and 2015, while the influx of imports followed through, climbing 227% in the same timespan.¹⁷ Thirdly, Brazil advanced technical cooperation projects with Africa in several sectors, such as agriculture, education, public administration, and conditional cash transfer programs (Albuquerque, 2015; Brasil, 2010). Moreover, high-level visits from government officials and commercial missions helped to confer dynamism to bilateral relations.

Opening new venues in Africa responded to Brazil's imperative of diversifying partnerships and reaching out to other developing countries.¹⁸ This South-South foreign policy orientation was instrumental for Brazil's goal of assuming a more representative role in decision-making positions within multilateral institutions. With 54 votes, the African Union was essential for the elections of two Brazilians for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, as well as for Brazil's candidacies for the Olympics and the World Cup. This support is crucial for the country's historical quest for a permanent seat at the Security Council.¹⁹

¹⁶ Brazil's move was met with reciprocal interest. Since 2003, 17 African countries established embassies in Brasília.

¹⁷ Available in: <http://www.mdic.gov.br/comercio-exterior/estatisticas-de-comercio-exterior>, accessed in September 2016

¹⁸ White (2010) categorizes Brazil's approach to Africa as divided between political diplomacy, commercial engagement and development cooperation.

¹⁹ Related to this, Brazil opened an embassy at the headquarters of the African Union, in Addis Ababa, becoming an observer to the organization. Brazil also initiated in 2010 a political-strategic dialogue with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Additionally, economic motives are illustrated by the interest in internationalizing Brazilian companies, in enhancing flows of trade and in securing oil imports from Africa. Besides material drivers, one can mention Brazil's aim to be considered a country whose actions are based on solidarity, which would ideally distinguish it both from former colonial powers and developing states as the case of China. Finally, Brazil's stance towards Africa can be explained by an interest to internationalize technical know-how, by bureaucratic moves, and by geopolitical reasons (Albuquerque, 2013).

3 Securitizing the South Atlantic: assessing Brazil's inroads

This section focuses on the empirical details of Brazil's bilateral and multilateral relations with its African partners, which steams from a renewed stance towards the other side of the South Atlantic. It starts with a brief overview of the country's recent projects of revitalization and modernization of the Navy. They form the material basis for subsequent external cooperative endeavors. I argue that Brazil relied on domestic capacities to then make use of both levels of analysis, the bilateral and the multilateral, in order to assure the securitization of the South Atlantic.

3.1 Defense domestic buildup

There has been a push for creating domestic awareness on a renovated role of the Armed Forces in Brazil's democratic circumstance. Under civilian control, the Ministry of Defense regained relative prestige and bureaucratic space. The presence of ambassador Celso Amorim, a former chancellor, as Defense minister between 2011 and 2015 helped to approximate foreign policy objectives with defense and security imperatives. As an indication, between 2009 and 2013, the Ministry of Defense and the Brazilian Cooperation

Agency (ABC), a body of the country's Ministry of External Relations, disbursed circa US\$ 1.5 million for military training programs (Seabra, 2014).

In such a context, the National Defense Strategy reunites three main guidelines for the defense sector in Brazil: (i) reorganization and reorientation of the Armed Forces in order for it to perform its constitutional duties in peace and war; (ii) reorganization of the defense industrial basis, which involves the national control of key technologies; and (iii) the continuity of the Armed Forces, with the idea that it should reflect the multiple traits of the Brazilian population. The obligatory military service rests under such objective (Brasil, 2012b).

There is an ingrained idea in the military mentality that Brazil will face defense challenges when reaching for its national objectives. As the National Defense Policy underscores, "it is unwise to imagine that a country with Brazil's potential will not face antagonisms when pursuing its legitimate interests. (...) The importance of the country's defense is a duty to all Brazilians" (Brasil, 2012a: 12). As the document shows, Brazil's Ministry of Defense aims at collectivizing this perception, creating awareness alongside the population. This is of utmost importance, since theory demonstrates securitization processes depend on the existence of an audience that supports the turning of something into a security concern. The definition of perils follows a path that goes through the levels of analysis of this paper: it starts domestically, then goes beyond, reaching bilateral and multilateral defense endeavors.

Three sectors are considered primordial within this domestic buildup: cybernetic, which is under the auspices of the Army; the space, with the Air Force; and nuclear technology under the responsibility of the Navy.²⁰ The Naval Nuclear Program is central for the

²⁰ Law 12.706 from 2012, authorized the creation of the Blue Amazon Defense Technologies S.A. (AMAZUL), a state-owned company that will be attached to the Ministry of Defense and the Navy Command. AMAZUL was originated by a split in the Naval Projects Management Company (EMGEPRON). Among its functions, AMAZUL is to promote, develop, absorb, transfer and keep the necessary nuclear technologies of the Brazilian Navy and of the Brazilian Nuclear Program (Brasil, 2012c).

development of the Navy's capabilities and has close connections with the Submarine Development Program (PROSUB), which is the result of a French-Brazilian partnership. It includes, for example, the construction of four conventional submarines, one nuclear propelled submarine as well as a shipyard and a submarine base. Other Navy projects include the construction of five escort vessels; five ocean patrol vessels of 1.8 thousand tons; one logistical support vessel; the design and manufacturing of 27 patrol vessels of 500 tons; the acquisition of amphibious vehicles; the procurement of aircraft carriers; and the creation of marine battalions for riverine operations (Brazil, 2012).

The Blue Amazon Management System (SisGAAz), to be fully set in 2024, is another instrument that is immersed in the reframing of the South Atlantic, as it will allow the monitoring of Brazilian jurisdictional waters.²¹ Its operation, under civil and military supervision, will tackle problems such as pollution prevention, control of scientific research at sea, combat of illicit traffic, so as it is to secure the pre-salt area. Other naval provisions involve guidelines for the formation of the Second Fleet, which will be located at the mouth of the Amazon River, connecting the overall stretch of Brazil's Atlantic coast and fomenting a sense of integrated defense.²²

This defense domestic buildup is associated with Brazil's participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), established in 1978 and reinforced after the crisis between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006. In 2011, Brazil assumed the command of UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force (MTF), the first of such kind to be part of a peacekeeping mission of the UN. Brazil's frigate "Liberal" operates as flagship in Mediterranean waters, heading vessels from countries such as Germany, Turkey and Greece. As Abdenur (2016: 19) writes, "Brazil's growing maritime concerns and ambitions in the South Atlantic made

²¹ The SisGAAz is likely to be attached to SISFRON, the Integrated Border Monitoring System being developed by the Army (Thompson and Muggah, 2015).

²² The Navigation Security project favors the expansion of the Navy's presence in the Amazon. Full implementation is due to 2031.

participation in UNIFIL a chance to test and broaden the Brazilian Navy's experience in a variety of tasks", ranging from surveillance to maritime interdiction operations.

This renewed focus on the South Atlantic is stated in the country's key defense documents: the National Defense Policy, the National Defense Strategy, and the Defense White Paper, all from 2012. The last one reads that Brazil's strong link to the sea is substantial, which "has induced the country to exert a natural influence over the South Atlantic" (Brazil, 2012: 21). The National Defense Policy mentions the area became part of Brazil's "strategic environment":

"South America is the regional arena in which Brazil is inserted. Aiming at deepening its cooperation ties, the country envisages a strategic environment that goes beyond the South American region and includes the South Atlantic and neighboring states of Africa, so as Antarctica. To the North, the proximity to the Caribbean sea imposes crescent attention to this region" (Brasil, 2012a: 21).²³

The securitization of the South Atlantic not only is immersed within a broader perspective towards Africa, but it also responds to proper dynamics. To start with, the discovering in 2007 of oil and natural gas sources in the pre-salt layer ignited Brazil's ambitions to the South Atlantic basin. The fields were estimated at up to 8 billion barrels of oil equivalent, making for the largest deep-water oilfield discovery 300 km from the Rio de Janeiro seashore and representing a way to trampoline Brazil's socioeconomic ascendance.²⁴ The relevance of this finding was such that the Brazilian Navy, through the Interministerial Commission for Sea Resources (CIRM), brought to the top of the agenda the "Blue Amazon" campaign, which started in 2004 and was then propagated for the greater public. As

²³ As regards Antarctica, the Defense White Paper (Brazil, 2012: 48) remarks an "unparalleled interest the region has for country", for the fact that great part of the available fishing activities in Brazil's coast is influenced by the water mass generated in Antarctic waters. See: Abdenur and Neto (2014b).

²⁴ See: www.economist.com/node/13348824, access in September 2016.

Abdenur and Neto (2014: 222) discuss, the Blue Amazon can be interpreted as a governmental attempt to foment a “maritime mentality” and “a South Atlantic identity in the domestic domain”.

When calling Brazil’s waters the “Blue Amazon”, the Navy attaches inedited significance to the South Atlantic, directly relating it to the Amazon, a region with roughly the same geographic area that is part of the country’s population imaginary. By doing so, the government assigns meanings previously proper to the forest to Brazil’s sea limits. Also having porous frontiers, great biodiversity, natural resources as well as potential for contributing for national development, the Blue Amazon should therefore be subject to state action. This justifies “the need to intensify monitoring and control of maritime traffic and of incidents to Brazilian authority” (Brazil, 2012: 21).

The intensification of maritime hardware, operations and geographical range works in a twofold manner. First, it is key for securitizing the South Atlantic. Navy’s bureaucratic interests and recovering of importance are in place when a complex array of projects leaves ground on the naval area. By stressing security concerns, the Navy faces fewer obstructions to rebuild its capacity and relative weight towards the other sectors of the Armed Forces within the Ministry of Defense. In moments of budgetary constrains and cuts in expenditures, as currently happens in Brazil, enhancing the (in-) security potential of the South Atlantic is strategic to keep financial support for maritime projects. Secondly, after helping to craft new threats with speeches and official publications, the Navy emphasizes its crucial role in dealing with such perils.

This material basis is grouped with Brazil’s own judgment on what constitutes a threat. Through bilateral and multilateral partnerships, Brazilian officials are able to broaden their views on how issues in the South Atlantic should be tackled. In other words, making use of both bilateral and multilateral levels of analysis eases the enduring of securitization practices and ultimately can generate a sense of regional identity. In this process, Brazil widens its national perspectives on threats and menaces, attempting to reinforce its own

perceptions and to carve a position of leadership in amassing South American and African support. As a former ministry of Defense explains,

“When we talk, for instance, about the ‘new threats’, we are taken almost intuitively to follow the points of view that are not necessarily ours. This does not mean they are less real. This concept and many others, however, should be subjected to critical analysis, one that departs from our vision of the world” (Amorim, 2012: 335).

3.2 Bilateral defense cooperation

Due to space constraints, my intention here is not to present a collection of Brazilian defense bilateral agreements and initiatives with the totality of its partners of Africa’s Western coast. Others have done so with proper quality.²⁵ Instead, I analyze the most representative bilateral contacts in the defense domain with some specific partners, as the case of South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau. By promoting these ties, Brazil attempted to foster a cooperative common sense towards the South Atlantic.

My point is that Brazil’s policymakers recently presented a discourse to their African counterparts that the South Atlantic should be subject to joint securitization. Brazilian officials assume external powers are interested in the economic and geopolitical potentials of the South Atlantic waters, and, relying on this perception, they aspire to create an area that needs to be secured not only by Brazil, but also by its African neighbors.²⁶ Brazilian authorities attempt to collectivize these claims and affirm such perils can affect the whole stability of the South Atlantic. Cooperative action is therefore required, which can further lead to the promotion of a common regional sense. This rhetorical strategy is subsequently

²⁵ See: Seabra (2016a and 2014); Aguilar (2013); Abdenur and Neto (2014a).

²⁶ Outsiders can assume the form of both state and non-state actors (Silva, 2014). In the case of state actors, they normally take of form of the NATO, the United Kingdom, the United States and China (see: Hurrell, 1983; Seabra, 2016a; Seabra, 2016b; and Silva, 2014). As regards non-state actors, they involve piracy, illicit drug trade, oil stealing, human trafficking, and armed robbery, not to mention others.

met by a practical push towards Africa. The next paragraphs indicate such move encompassed a series of initiatives, for instance, military training, high-level visits, surveying of continental shelves, promotion of naval joint exercises and selling of maritime hardware.

When it comes to training, in the timespan between 2001 and 2011, the Brazilian Navy received military officers from Nigeria (1), Guinea-Bissau (5) South Africa (7), Angola (22), and Namibia (1.179). On the other hand, Brazil privileged countries such as the United States (88), Argentina (34) and Portugal (21), with South Africa (1) being the only African state to receive a Brazilian officer for matters of naval military training (Brazil, 2012: 109).

The prominent number of Namibian officers being trained by the Brazilian Navy refers to the fact the defense cooperation between Brazil and Namibia is the oldest one spearheaded by Brazil. Since the independence of Namibia from South Africa, Brazil develops capacity building activities on the ground with Namibian counterparts, which latter led to a defense cooperation agreement signed in 1994 (Abdenur and Neto, 2014a). Pedro Seabra has written extensively about the topic and points out bilateral ties with Namibia contrast with others regarding the African continent, as it was built upon extensive military-to-military partnership.

Brazil's Naval Mission in Walvis Bay, the country's largest commercial port and deep-water harbor, "effectively helped building Namibia's Navy from scratch" (Seabra, 2016b: 110). In 2001 and 2009, additional Naval Cooperation Agreements were signed, complementing the first one and establishing shared financial costs. They are centered on the continuation of training activities, on the providing of patrol motorboats and ships, on logistical support, as well as on the promotion of mutual trust (Brasil, 2003; Brasil, 2009).²⁷ Bilateral cooperation achieved effective results, with Brazil's contribution for the establishment in

²⁷ Former minister of Defense Jacques Wagner affirmed in 2015 that Brazil has "a successful model of cooperation with Namibia". Available in: <http://www.defesa.gov.br/noticias/15911-marinha-forma-1-157-novos-sargentos>, access in September 2016.

2011 of a Namibia formation course for mariners. Interestingly, these courses are held also in Portuguese, which adds up to Brazil's "soft power with a country non-member of the CPLP" (Abdenur and Neto, 2014a: 227).

Moreover, Brazil provided technical know-how and helped in the surveying process for Namibia to delimitate its continental shelf and to make its submission to the United Nations' Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS).²⁸ There is considerable expectancy in the economic potential of Namibia's seabed, since it sits on the similar geographic latitude where pre-salt hydrocarbon deposits were discovered in Brazil. Having one of the most advanced deep-water drilling technologies in the world, Brazil has vested interests in possible economic endeavors on the other side of the South Atlantic.

High-level visits compose a relevant part of bilateral contacts. In 2012, for example, ministers Celso Amorim from Brazil and Charles Namoloh from Namibia affirmed the importance of bilateral cooperation for strengthening national capacities in fighting maritime insecurity, as the case of antipiracy actions, illegal fishing and drug trafficking. A year later, Brazil's Ministry of Defense settled a mission with the participation of 14 businessmen from the country's national military production to Namibia and Angola. This paradigmatic case shows that, by sharing military expertise and acting as a provider of cooperation, Brazil foments common views on possible threats in South Atlantic waters. Without leaving aside Brazil's interests, the push for continuous defense relations with Namibia aims at promoting the perspective that South Atlantic problems are to be solved

²⁸ The presence of marine, energetic and mineral reserves in the South Atlantic is one of the reasons Brazil made in 2004 a submission to the United Nations' CLCS to expand its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. In fact, the Brazilian Navy already considers areas beyond 200 nautical miles part of Brazil's jurisdictional waters. Additionally, the government requires researchers to be constantly present in the South Atlantic archipelago of São Pedro and São Paulo, as well as it endeavors to make the Trindade island a world heritage site (Abdenur and Neto, 2013).

by South Atlantic states. Brazil's Ministry of External Relations classifies the naval partnership with Namibia a "prime example of South-South cooperation".²⁹

Brazil's relations with South Africa in the defense sector do not hold the same dynamism as happens with Namibia. In 2003, both countries signed a defense cooperation agreement with only limited results. New attempts, however, are in process. Most attention is on the development of the short-range air-to-air A-Darter missile, a cooperative attempt to foster aerospace industries of both countries. Brazilian recently acquired Gripen NG fighters will be equipped with such weapon, which can later be exported to partner Air Forces, namely the ones from developing states. Relations continued to improve with the adoption of a strategic partnership in 2010. Brazil's policymakers value the relationship with Pretoria, since both countries share geopolitical views on the establishment of a more multipolar order in which Southern countries have more room to maneuver and to voice their interests.

The focus on enhancing indigenous industrial capacity integrates the cooperation between Brazil, India and South Africa (IBSA), which has a trilateral work group on defense matters. The maritime exercise IBSAMAR is in its fifth edition and evolved into a complex naval joint-operation with vessels, aircrafts and officers from the three countries. Although IBSAMAR could raise the prospects of a maritime axis linking the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, Vaz (2015: 170) argues there are no incentives for Brazil to change its "primary focus on the South Atlantic to favour the emergence of a bi-ocean governance framework". Outside the IBSA, South Africa regularly participates at the multinational exercise ATLASUR along with the navies of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Activities cover, for instance, anti-piracy and anti-submarine operations in the South Atlantic.

With Angola, Brazil formalized a defense cooperation agreement in 2010, which created a Defense Cooperation Joint-Committee. Moreover, the two countries partner in training courses offered by Brazil's War Naval College and Angola acquired light attack and

²⁹ Available at: <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/component/tags/tag/972-namibia-en>, access in August 2016.

advanced training A-29 Super Tucano turboprops for border surveillance missions. In the maritime sector, Brazil's company Naval Projects Management Company (EMGEPRON) provided technical support to the surveying process of Angola's continental platform, which resembles the Namibian case. In 2014, Brazil signed a memorandum of understanding aiming at supporting the implementation of the Angolan Naval Power Development Program (Pronaval).³⁰

During a bilateral meeting in 2016, Brazil's minister of Defense, Aldo Rebelo, summed up to which extent the partnership with Angola is connected to the South Atlantic: "We have the Atlantic, with our common strategic responsibilities. In it there are our trade, our richness, minerals and the risks posed by piracy. Securing this Atlantic patrimony as well as the security of our countries is a challenge" (Brasil, 2016). It is also worth mentioning Angola is an active member of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) and was responsible for the revitalization of the ZOPACAS in 2007, which shows Luanda upholds similar views with Brasília in respect to the South Atlantic.

With Nigeria, Brazil has its main trade partner in Africa, mainly due to oil imports from Abuja. This sole fact makes it important for them to enhance cooperation in protecting maritime trade routes in the South Atlantic. The two countries hold a bilateral mechanism for strategic dialogue and a defense cooperation agreement, established in 2010. In the occasion, Nigeria showed interest in acquiring Brazilian patrol boats and shared preoccupation with unauthorized seabed mining in the South Atlantic (Abdenur and Neto, 2014a). In 2015, a committee from Nigeria's National Defense College promoted a technical visit to Brazil's Ministry of Defense, showing interest in enhancing defense cooperation.

Lastly, Guinea-Bissau is a strategic locus for Brazil's attempt to develop a common security sense over the South Atlantic and to posit itself as a contributor to world peace. Before the

³⁰ According to Pronaval, Angola was expected to buy seven 500-ton patrol ships, and Brazil would give military training and technical support for the construction of a dockyard in the African country (Brasil, 2014). The plan did not go as expected. Economic slowdown in Angola in reason of a drop in oil prices as well as a production crisis in Brazil's shipyards prevented its implementation. See: <http://goo.gl/M4Gkds>, accessed in September 2016.

creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, bilateral relations between Brazil and Guinea-Bissau were episodic. Two years later, Brazil was elected president of the PBC's country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau and, in the mandate of 2014-2015, assumed the leadership of the PBC as a whole, being the first developing state to undertake the role. One of the key responsibilities of the PBC's mission in Guinea-Bissau is to support the reform the country's defense and security sector.

The multilateral framework of the PBC consolidated a basis for further cooperative defense projects, as the case of the defense cooperation accord of 2006 that was approved by Brazil's Congress in 2008. One of the direct consequences of it was the establishment of a bilateral mission for technical-military cooperation. A center for security forces formation that received Brazilian funding was inaugurated in 2014. In addition, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) funded US\$ 2 million in 2007 for the training of 30 senior military officers from Guinea-Bissau in Brazil (UN Peacebuilding Support Office, 2008). In a recent visit from Guinea-Bissauan minister of Defense Cadi Seidi to Brasília, Brazil's minister Jacques Wagner used the South Atlantic as an allegory of the union between the two countries: "Africa is our strategic surrounding and the Atlantic ocean unites us" (Brasil, 2015).

Apart from the mentioned countries, Brazil has defense cooperation accords with Equatorial Guinea (2010), São Tomé and Príncipe (2010), Senegal (2010), and Cape Verde (2016), which account in total for nine formal instruments on defense matters.³¹ Navy exercises are commonly enacted with Benin, Cape Verde, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Mauritania, Namibia and Senegal (Thompson and Muggah, 2015). With Cape Verde, Brazil signed a technical-military cooperation agreement in 1994 and has a Naval Mission under operation since 2013, which focuses on military formation and on the modernization of Cape Verde's Coast Guard. Following the examples of Namibia and Angola, Brazil also discussed providing expertise to surveying the continental platform of the African partner.

³¹ Seabra (2016a) argues the lack of ratification of these accords did not prevent them to operate.

Although most of Brazil's defense cooperation occurs with South America, previous lines show that a number of initiatives were forwarded to Africa. "The strategy of dissuasion is complemented by the strategy of cooperation. (...) Brazil's interest is served by support to other countries that revert in benefit to ourselves in medium and long terms" (Amorim, 2014: 36). Mostly referring to South America, the quote from the former minister of Defense can be applied, in minor degree, to bilateral relations with Africa. What is lacking, however, is a more coherent approach towards African partners. As next section shows, there is only a loose connection between Brazil's securitization attempts and the fomenting of a cooperative sense in the South Atlantic.

3.3 Multilateral defense cooperation

Defense cooperation in the multilateral domain was instrumentalized by Brazil in order to foster converging views over the South Atlantic. The idea was similar to the one applied in bilateral terms, but here collectivized. Following Brazil's recent defense buildup, engaging multilaterally was another means the country encountered to socialize its views on the South Atlantic and its perceptions on which threats exist and should be securitized. This section shows Brazil did so not through a formal regional institution as the case of the NATO, but rather with the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), an informal setting that is not a military alliance or arrangement of collective security. Other types of multilateral defense engagements, for instance the ones via CPLP, are only considered en passant.

The ZOPACAS was created by a United Nations General Assembly's Resolution (A/RES/41/11) in 1986, gathered African and South American states and declared the South Atlantic a zone of peace and cooperation.³² In its text, the resolution "calls upon all

³² The resolution received only one rejection vote, given by the United States.

states of *all other regions*, in particular the military significant” ones to “scrupulously respect the *region of the South Atlantic* as a zone of peace and cooperation” through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence, the non-introduction of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction and the non-extension into the region of rivalries and conflicts that are foreign to it (United Nations General Assembly, 1986, remarked). It was the first moment that an encompassing initiative towards the South Atlantic appeared in Brazil’s diplomatic discourse.

The resolution clearly states the South Atlantic as a separate “region”. It does so by two rhetoric strategies. Firstly, it distinguishes ZOPACAS from “all other regions”, stating the collective character of the South Atlantic to be diverse in terms of geographical boundaries and thematic content. Secondly, it qualifies the South Atlantic as a region in which peace and cooperation are present. In other words, the crafting of an idea of “region” presupposes active bilateral and multilateral cooperation amongst the interested parties. In the context of the end of the Cold War, when bipolar rivalries were restarted, underpinning the peaceful element of the ZOPACAS is a means to keep it apart from external interferences. Parties underscore the need “to preserve *the region* from measures of militarization, the arms race, the presence of foreign military bases and, above all, nuclear weapons” (United Nations General Assembly, 1986, remarked). Ideally, the resolution attempts to create cohesiveness between the two sides of the South Atlantic and places the ZOPACAS as a basis for promoting further cooperation between its members.

The founding document mentions the apartheid regime of South Africa twice, affirming its elimination is a central condition for guaranteeing peace and security in the South Atlantic. This excerpt reveals that worries with regional security involve not only the non-interference of external powers, as well as instabilities proper to the countries of the region. Furthermore, the resolution brings the idea that signatories should promote social and economic development, protection of the environment, conservation of resources and

peace and security. All these calls are present, at least rhetorically in the bilateral relations of Brazil with its South Atlantic African partners.

Throughout the years, the ZOCAPAS was repeatedly discussed in the United Nations General Assembly, where the spirit of the original resolution was recalled. The content of the successive multilateral documents approaches issues such as: the freedom of navigation and the admission of Namibia as a member (1990); peace talks in Angola (1992); the entry of South Africa into the grouping (1994); regulation of radioactive and toxic waste as well as cooperation on drug-related issues (1999); prevention and combat of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (2001); not to mention other recurrent topics that echo the resolution of 1986.

ZOPACAS' documents stresses peace, security and development are intertwined, which refers back to the initial mandate of the grouping. When promoting a new region, member states commit to cooperate in diverse areas on the political, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, and on the security and defense sectors. Such holistic reading on matters of security is present in Brazil's foreign policy. It favors an approach that is not solely centered on security matters, but is also trying to solve the inner causes of the problem. In its bilateral cooperation with Africa, the country endeavors to conjugate such dimensions.

One important element of the ZOPACAS' provisions is the promotion of the South Atlantic as a nuclear-weapon free zone (United Nations General Assembly, 1995). This constituted a sensitive topic to the ZOPACAS, especially after the democratizations of Argentina, Brazil and South Africa, states that control nuclear know-how. In their meetings, the three countries supported following the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, calling for the peaceful right to nuclear enrichment and proper disarmament. Together with the Latin America and the Caribbean (treaty of Tlatelolco) and Africa (treaty of Pelindaba), the South

Atlantic would be another region in an international effort to promote the Southern hemisphere as a nuclear-weapon-free zone (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).³³

Apart from these thematic undertakings and ensuing debates at the General Assembly, the ZOPACAS' history is not a linear one. The forum had its “gold period” with the ministerial meetings of Rio de Janeiro (1988), Abuja (1990), Brasília (1994), Somerset West (1996) and Buenos Aires (1998). Throughout the years, declarations and decisions on several issues were implemented, for instance: on the establishment of the permanent committee of the ZOPACAS; on the denuclearization of the South Atlantic; on business cooperation; democracy and political pluralism; drug trafficking; protection of marine environment; and illegal fishing activities.

This “gold period” was followed by significant lethargy in the groups' meetings so as in its debates at the General Assembly. This moment of near inactivity of multilateral contacts only ended with the organization in 2007 of the VI ministerial meeting in Luanda, which relied on Brazil's diplomatic support. In 2010, a round table aiming to “revitalize” the ZOPACAS and to gather inputs for a new work program for the zone was set in Brasília. The agenda encompassed maritime security and fighting against transnational crime; maritime and aerial cooperation; environmental cooperation; and the mapping and surveying of the maritime seabed. Although the gathering informed the “unequivocal potential” for cooperation between its members, it remarked the agenda from Luanda was yet to be fulfilled (Brasil, 2011).

The report from this meeting recovers the original provisions of the ZOPACAS and accentuates initiatives to promote a shared understanding of the South Atlantic as a cooperative region. Whereas the delegation from Nigeria brought the fact that South Atlantic waters are rich in minerals and hydrocarbon reserves, Brazilian officials

³³ The treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok and the Antarctic Treaty add up to forming the Southern hemisphere as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

reasserted the need to establish integrated action for the exploration of such resources.³⁴ On the security side, Brazil raised possible cooperative practices for the revitalization of the ZOPACAS: training courses, intensifying of naval interchanges, shared participation in the making of ships, and professional formation of Navies. Argentina received backing from the group in respect to its dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas/Falklands Islands.

The document states that at the end of the reunion, all countries should determine what they could offer and which type of cooperative support they need. “Measures should be *concrete*, with a level of detail more precise” (Brasil, 2011: 14, remarked in original). This suggests, on the one side, that the ZOPACAS was lacking behind in terms of matching discourses with practices and that the Luanda meeting in 2007 could not overcome the inertia of the grouping. On the other, it shows that interest on the zone was kept alive. In this direction, Nigerian officials even suggested ZOPACAS should integrate the Africa-South American Summit (ASA), an inter-regional mechanism devised in 2006. The proposal did not go forward.

The VII ministerial meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, continued the effort to invigorate the group, bringing in a plan of action and a common declaration. The final document reinforces previous provisions and affirms the need “for a regional coordination of efforts to counter activities of piracy and armed robbery at sea” (ZOPACAS, 2013: 16). The meeting represented a new venture to craft a common view on the South Atlantic. Brazil’s chancellor Antonio de Aguiar Patriota reinstated the commitment of the group towards a South Atlantic identity:

³⁴ In the end of 2013, the Brazilian Geological Survey (CPRM), a state-owned company, asked for the authorization of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to explore cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts at the Rio Grande Rise, which is located in South Atlantic’s international waters. A year later, ISA accepted Brazil’s work plan and granted it a 15-year exclusive right to explore the mentioned area. With the approval, Brazil became the first country in the Southern hemisphere to be granted such a concession, only the fourth ever granted (ISA, 2014).

“This meeting proves, once again, the compromise of South American and African countries with the South Atlantic identity. An identity that consolidates itself and assumes greater importance in respect to the transformations we see in the international arena.” (Patriota, 2013: 1).³⁵

The idea that the (in-) security of the South Atlantic exists and that it should be dealt regionally also was echoed by Brazil’s minister of Defense, Celso Amorim: “if we do not take care of the peace and security of the South Atlantic, others will do it. And not in the way we want: with a vision of developing countries that reject any colonial or neocolonial attitude” (Amorim, 2013). The speech reinforces a supposedly common attitude that is socialized by the members of the ZOPACAS. Underlying it is the notion the revitalization of the ZOPACAS is part of Brazil’s own security, as explains the national Defense White Paper: “in diplomatic terms, the reinforcement of ZOPACAS is important for the country’s defense” (Brazil, 2012: 39).

During the meeting, parties agreed to hold ZOPACAS’ ministerial meetings on a biennial basis, an objective that was not achieved. Since then, the VIII ministerial meeting that should have taken place in Cape Verde in 2015 is on hold, mostly due to financial and logistical hindrances, not to mention lack of widespread interest by African countries. In this respect, although prospects for a shared identity and the construction of the South Atlantic as a region are in play, these views are not complemented by recurrent multilateral efforts. Furthermore, securitization calls over the South Atlantic are scarcely met by multilateral actions, showing a gap between determining threats and dealing with them.

Other multilateral initiatives between Brazil and Africa recently developed are the mentioned Africa-South America Summit (ASA). It involves 66 states from the two continents, which accounts for almost a third of the members of the United Nations System.

³⁵ Abdenur and Neto (2014: 216) go on the same direction and affirm the ZOPACAS represents an effort by Brazil to articulate a “common identity”.

ASA is another informal mechanism through which Brazil – and also its African counterparts – can project their interests. It guards relationship with the regaining of importance of Africa within the country's external endeavors and has been used as a forum for technical cooperation and diplomatic support. Since 2006, when the first summit was held in Abuja, African and South American countries have gathered in Nova Esparta, Venezuela (2009), and Malabo, Equatorial Guinea (2013).³⁶

Additionally, Brazil and Africa relate multilaterally in terms of defense and security through the CPLP and the IBSA. With the CPLP, Brazil signed a Defense Cooperation Protocol in 2006, which creates a platform for sharing military defense knowledge.³⁷ Cooperation within the CPLP also aims to promote a common policy in defense matters and to contribute to develop material capacities of the Armed Forces of the member countries (CPLP, 2006). In 2009, parties agreed on the establishment of a memorandum of understanding to support peacekeeping operations. The CPLP also regularly convenes at the Operation FELINO, a military exercise that gathers every constituting member, including Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and East Timor.

4 Brazil's South Atlantic securitization: an incomplete endeavor

Previous sections centered on explaining the objectives of this article: (i) how Brazil securitized the South Atlantic, which was defined as the major objective; and the analysis of its execution, or (ii) to what extent Brazilian securitization moves were able to promote the South Atlantic as a cooperative region led by Brazil. The analysis departed from a

³⁶ The Abuja Declaration (Africa-South America Summit, 2006: 5) brought a mention to the ZOPACAS, stating that countries “undertake to strengthen regional cooperation among organizations and mechanisms (...) as important instruments for consolidating peace and security as well as at bilateral and regional levels”.

³⁷ It was ratified only in 2015. See: <http://goo.gl/KfCMSw>, accessed in September 2016.

theoretical discussion on the concepts of region, securitization and regional security complexes, for then to focus on Brazil's bilateral and multilateral engagements with the other margin of the South Atlantic. This section shows these foreign policy endeavors are not coherent and did not manage to promote a shared cooperative sense over the South Atlantic.

First of all, Brazil's renewed stance towards Africa is indeed connected to the country's securitization practices over the South Atlantic. In the recent administrations of the Worker's Party, the ministries of Defense, especially in reason of the Navy's enhanced bureaucratic role, and of External Relations could bring together views regarding the need to securitize South Atlantic waters.³⁸ Through reiterated public discourses, official documents, interviews and governmental meetings, such actors crafted the image of a region that is subject to constant external pressure. Mainly because of its economic and geopolitical importance, the South Atlantic raises the attention of outsiders, which makes it necessary for South American and African countries to combine forces and to collaborate in order to keep it as a zone of peace and cooperation, as subsequent ZOPACAS' documents refer.

These utterances were later transmuted into practice through Brazil's bilateral and multilateral endeavors. Following the framework of Buzan and Hansen (2009) developed in the second section of this paper, I argue that the Brazilian government did not deal with the (self-) identified perils with day-to-day regular policies, nor with urgent procedures that violated legal and social rules. Rather, I discuss that Brazil went for an intermediate approach, opting to allocate special resources, to enhance financial provisions for the building of maritime hardware, and to promote cooperation initiatives. Brazilian

³⁸ As stated before, reasons for this go beyond the scope of this work but happen mostly due to bureaucratic, economic, political-diplomatic and geopolitical reasons.

authorities also attempted to promote domestic awareness in respect to the South Atlantic, as is the case with the Blue Amazon campaign.

I contend, however, that Brazil's securitization push is not a coherent one. For securitization to successfully occur, the definition of what makes a threat is dependent on the previous rhetoric construction of it as such. Also, discourses and practices need to be intertwined, for the reason that when a state maintains something is a menace, this presupposes subsequent action. Brazil's case bears some inconsistencies. On the one hand, Brazilian official discourse only bring loose views on why the South Atlantic needs to be securitized and on how these processes should be carried out. Documents such as the National Defense Policy, the National Defense Strategy and the Defense White Paper broadly mention the South Atlantic and its "strategic" role for the country. No comprehensive policies are clearly stated in their lines, nor do they state how specific perils should be tackled. Hence, the rhetoric construction of a menace remains incomplete.

On the other hand, Brazil's promotion of such insecurities was not coherent in the time frame that started in 2003. In the domestic level, recent budgetary constraints impeded the country to keep up with enhancing its domestic defense capacity.³⁹ This had an impact on the bilateral level, since technical cooperation projects on the defense and security realms depend on financial availability. The multilateral level also did not hold a consistent pace, as demonstrated by the calendar of ZOPACAS' meetings. The informal grouping faced a prolonged hiatus between 1998 and 2007 and is now confronting new hurdles regarding the organization of the next ministerial meeting. Lack of continuity on the three levels of analysis is a major hindrance Brazil faces. I therefore argue that Brazil's securitization endeavors lack not only temporal endurance but also complementarity between discourse and practice.

³⁹ In 2016 the Ministry of Defense suffered a financial constraint of R\$ 2.8 billion (US\$ 870 million). See: <http://goo.gl/Yuolgu>, accessed in September 2016.

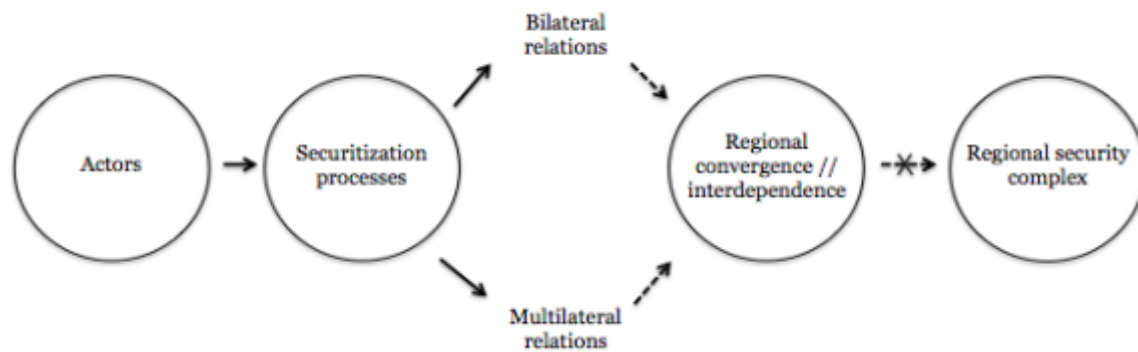


Figure 02. Lack of cohesiveness in Brazil's endeavors

As stated beforehand, I defend Brazil makes use of both bilateral and multilateral relations in order to foster collective views. By doing so, Brazilian authorities externalize foreign policy goals, claiming the need for cooperative action. As happens with the crafting of insecurities, Brazilian-African bilateral defense and security relations also lack consistency. A first problem is one of origin: since there is no clear definition on what composes a threat, effective bilateral cooperation is harmed. When saying the “South Atlantic” as a whole is subject to external interests, Brazil has a harder time to propose concerted initiatives towards specific threats.

The second problem is related to the first and involves a “one size fits all” approach. In some cases it indeed reached visible results, as with the surveying of the continental platforms of Namibia and Angola, or with military trainings programs that could be further replicated. This, however, is not applicable to all initiatives developed by Brazil with its African counterparts. The absence of official definition for specific perils as well as of particular agendas to each partner impairs the ability Brazil has to tailor more efficient and cooperative relations. A non-standardized approach could more easily promote proper interdependence, which, for its turn, would enhance the chances of engendering shared views on the South Atlantic.

The ZOPACAS echoes such a lack of consistency. As far as reuniting the 24 members of the grouping is not a simple task, the forum's official statements do not unfold in matching engagements. Both Luanda (2007) and Montevideo (2013) action plans were attempts to bring the ZOPACAS from inertia and to give substance to its words. Nevertheless, their provisions are much more a "call to action" and an organized attempt to make the ZOPACAS an operational cooperative forum. The lack of connection between its pledges and the bilateral relations in the security and defense domains amongst the South Atlantic countries proves such an argument.

In other words, the bilateral and the multilateral dimensions of Brazil's engagements over the South Atlantic do not communicate properly amongst each other and they face inner problems in fomenting effective cooperation. This is depicted in Figure 02 with the image of the dashed arrows. Even though Brazil repeatedly tried to promote interdependence and regional convergence with its South Atlantic patterns, this did not in fact occur. In reality, there is no such thing as "regional interdependence" or "collective engagement" when it comes to the South Atlantic. Instead, what takes place on the ground are Brazil's bilateral initiatives with specific African countries, which clearly does not suffice for a broad definition of "regional convergence", even less so of "regional security complex".

5 Final remarks

This paper demonstrated how Brazil recently sought dynamic relationships with the African continent from 2003 on.⁴⁰ Focusing on the security and defense endeavors from Brasília towards its African partners, I analyzed both bilateral and multilateral dimensions in order to ascertain to which extent Brazil could engender the South Atlantic as a

⁴⁰ Future works should investigate possible continuities and discontinuities of Brazil's defense initiatives during the period when the Worker's Party was in the presidency (2003-2016). Analysts shall also study to which degree bilateral and multilateral engagements with Africa were affected by changes in the leadership of the Minister of Defense.

cooperative region. I departed from a theoretical discussion and afterwards looked into Brazil's bilateral and multilateral initiatives. When it comes to multilateral endeavors, I focused on the case of the ZOPACAS, which was recently revitalized as an inter-regional cooperation and dialogue forum.

I understand Brazilian authorities securitized diverse issues related to the South Atlantic and attempted to define the ocean as a separated geographic entity. In order to do so, they made use of official discourse, publications and meetings with its African partners and at the United Nations. Securitization processes rely on the existence of an audience and I argue that Brazil played such game for both its population and for its African partners. In the domestic arena, portraying the South Atlantic as a zone subject to perils was important for the consecution of the Blue Amazon idea and for the rebuilding of the military hardware of the country, namely in the naval sector. When it comes to the African audience, Brazil promoted the South Atlantic as an area with rich natural resources and economic potential that could raise the attention of external powers and non-state actors.

In conceptual terms, the South Atlantic clearly is not a regional economic institution (Powers and Goertz, 2011). It also does not fit flawlessly in the definition of a regional security complex, since these "are defined by durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of subglobal, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 45). Such is not the case of the South Atlantic, whose levels of defense cooperation and security interdependence are still not frequent and are mostly centered on initiatives headed by Brazil.

The "regional" element is another important aspect. I follow the idea Brazil has actively engaged in fostering the South Atlantic as a region. I do not assume, however, the country was fully successful in this aspect. Whereas a myriad of securitization practices were pushed forward in the last decade, they did not follow a coherent and sustained foreign policy strategy. Above all, Brazil could not promote proper linkages between its bilateral and multilateral initiatives, which left a void between intentions and practices. This

incomplete endeavor led to what I call here a “regional security complex in the making”, in reference to the theory of Buzan and Wæver (2003). To put differently, Brazil lacked consistency, which clashes with official calls for a grand strategy.

Bilateral contacts were much more frequent in comparison to the multilateral ones. This is not a problem in itself, but surely weakens the plausibility of regional cohesiveness as well as of the promotion of shared understandings of the South Atlantic. I am not saying here Brazil and its African partners do not share some security concerns over the South Atlantic, which is stated at the meetings of the ZOPACAS. I argue that the efforts were not entirely sufficient or sustained. The lack of a regular schedule of multilateral reunions proves my point.

Furthermore, Brazil’s engagements were qualitatively more diverse in the bilateral domain in comparison to the multilateral domain. One explanation is that multilateral settings, even when informal, can hinder the ability states have to push forward their preferences. Another view is that Brazil’s historical contacts with several African partners favored direct contacts. A third possibility is that foreign policy objectives can be more easily achieved through bilateral means, especially when one considers the disparity of material power between Brazil and its South Atlantic African counterparts. Fourthly, by acting bilaterally, Brazil can more easily imprint its *own view* on the South Atlantic to others, which helps this area to be perceived by Africans with Brazilian interpretations. Indeed, Brazil’s know-how on the surveying of the ocean seabed and subsoil and on military training was used as a cooperative instrument with these countries. Also, Brazil’s material capacity and recent expanding of its defense hardware enabled its inroads in Africa.

Moreover, in order to work, the ZOPACAS requires concerted participation and agreement of all its members, which makes it considerably harder for it to function in comparison to the bilateral option. The lack of ministerial meetings between 1998 and 2007 is an indicator of problems of continuity. Attempts to revitalize the grouping in 2007 and 2013 could not provide consistency and the meeting that should occur in Cape Verde in 2015 is

still on hold. As far as Nigeria attempted to connect the ZOPACAS with the Africa-South America Summit (ASA), which also faces hurdles of continuity, the idea was not fully supported by Brazil. Future works should explore the points of view of African countries, examining what has conformed their visions, which are clearly not unique, towards the South Atlantic. The relation between external powers and African states in security and defense matters is also lacking more explanation.

In conclusion, I consider that several defense cooperation initiatives conducted by Brazil indeed matched its interests in relation to Africa. In the same vein, the partners of Africa's Western coast have relied on Brazil as a provider of cooperation, as the cases of Namibia and Guinea-Bissau. Brazil's advances, however, were not conformed by convergence between bilateral actions and the ZOPACAS. At best, this happened at the rhetorical level. In the end, the region-building process in the South Atlantic is still an incomplete story.

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